

Reply to Office Action of May 29, 2008

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

I. Status of the Claims

Claim 9 is objected to.

Claim 2 has been herein cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter therein.

Claims 1, 3, 9, and 10 are herein amended. No new matter is added.

Thus, claims 1 and 3-11 are pending in the application.

Regarding the objection to claim 9, Applicants amended claim 9 to be in independent form, as proposed by the Examiner. Applicants submit that claim 9 is now in appropriate form.

II. Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,931,622 to Ohtsuki et al. ("Ohtsuki"). Applicants respectfully traverse. Claim 2 has been cancelled, rendering the rejection moot.

Claims 1 and 9 have been amended to recite the feature that:

the card support surface extends in a horizontal direction and has an area enough to arrange a plurality of cards, and the card end surface extends on both sides of the input and output executing unit to allow the card sliding on the card support surface to pass through the input and output executing unit.

Because of the above features, each of the card end surface and the card support surface extends on both sides (that is, in a right-left direction) of the input and output executing unit, which

Reply to Office Action of May 29, 2008

is positioned in the center. Therefore, it is possible to arrange a plurality of cards on the card support surface, and when an appropriate card is selected, it is possible to move the selected card from the disposed position of the selected card to the card end surface by sliding the card on the card support surface. It is further possible to continuously slide the selected card while abutting the card against the card end surface on the card support surface. Therefore, especially in a case of using a plurality of cards, it is possible to read out or write information from/into each of the cards smoothly in sequence. Moreover, as the player is not required to hold the card in his/her hand in order to read out or write information from/into the card, and has only to slide the cards on the card support surface, a smoother and more efficient operation of the device can be provided. Therefore, the card support surface has a function as a work table for reading and writing of the card, in addition to a function for allowing a selected card to slide across the card support surface.

In contrast, the Examiner contends that cardholder 15 in Ohtsuki corresponds to the card support surface of the instant invention. Further, the Examiner contends that Ohtsuki's abutting portion 57 corresponds to the card end surface, and Ohtsuki's contact terminals 26 correspond to the input and output executing unit. But it is apparent that the cardholder 15 is not configured so that a plurality of cards can be arranged thereon. *See* Figures 3A and 4. Ohtsuki discloses that, when the abutting portion 57 is pushed and moved downwardly by inserting the card, the contact terminals 26 are brought into contact with terminals of the electronic card. *See* Figures 3A and 3B, and col. 4, lines 10-16. Further, when a rear end of the electronic card moves beyond the card guide 21, the card latch 20A causes the card guide 21 to move up and down. Therefore, it is apparent that the card receiving device disclosed by Ohtsuki is for only one electronic card. As mentioned above, Ohtsuki fails to disclose and teach the cardholder on which a plurality of cards can be arranged.

Reply to Office Action of May 29, 2008

Furthermore, Ohtsuki does not disclose the concept of realizing smooth processing of reading out from and writing into a plurality of cards.

Applicants submit that Ohtsuki does not disclose all of the elements of claims 1 and 9, and respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn. Claims 3 and 4 depend from claim 1 and are allowable based at least on their dependency and the arguments above.

III. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ohtsuki in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,553,436 to Webb et al. ("Webb"). Claims 6, 7, and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ohtsuki in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,596,668 to Berbeco. Claims 8 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ohtsuki in view of Berbeco and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,098,889 to Ogawa et al. ("Ogawa"). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claims 5-7 all depend from claim 1 and are allowable based on the arguments above that Ohtsuki does not disclose a card support surface configured so that a plurality cards can be arranged and slid thereon. Claim 10 has been amended to recite a similar element as claim 1 and is allowable over Ohtsuki based on the arguments above. Claim 11 depends from claim 10 and is likewise allowable.

Furthermore, neither Webb, Berbeco, nor Ogawa disclose and/or suggest a card support surface where a plurality of cards can be arranged, and an input and output execution unit from or to which information is read or written from a card by sliding the card on a card support surface.

Reply to Office Action of May 29, 2008

Therefore, none of Ohtsuki, Webb, Berbeco, or Ogawa, either alone or in any combination, either anticipate or render the claims unpatentable. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the following, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below if the Examiner believes any issue can be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or any Examiner's Amendment. In view of the above, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Dated: August 29, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

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